



SLOWLY

Om-at squatted on his haunches under a bloody sunset sky and watched one of the younger males mate with his mother. He could remember when In-sad had been born, screeching between a Low Woman's legs, covered in fear and pain. Om-at had been a number of summers old already, though just what that number was, no one could say. Now In-sad was himself old enough to come sidling up to a female, laying his guest-gift on the ground, stretching out one hand, begging.

As he watched, Pan-at-lee crouched over the dead baby antelope, seeming to ignore In-sad's imploring whispers, not words, which were precious difficult magic, just sounds, not quite whimpers of desperate desire. She touched its skin next to the death wound on its throat, put her finger to her lips, pink tongue flashing briefly, brown eyes squeezing shut. Long, still moment, In-sad holding his breath, then Pan-at-lee opened her eyes again and smiled at him, picked up the guest-gift and clutched it to her breast. In-sad's crow of pleasure echoed off the rock-face nearby.

Pan-at-lee positioned herself for him, smiling,

waiting, lying on her back as befit O-lo-a's Second Woman. In-sad scowled briefly, but he must have known this before he approached her. Pan-at-lee represented status more than anything else, and she demanded a very pretty guest-gift indeed. In-sad touched her here and there, sniffed at her, then mounted, hips curling under as far as he could force them to go, grunting with effort.

Om-at sat back on his buttocks, legs splayed in the dust, back against the scaly bark of his favourite old tree, one hand on his own genitals, watching, remembering all the scenes of his life. Arousal was a splinter somewhere behind his eyes, a fist curled at the bottom of his abdomen. Quite a few sunsets had accumulated in memory, he realized, since the last time he'd caught a guest-gift and come crawling up to a female, whining appropriately, hand outstretched. Even the Low Women demanded something, a little mouse, a bird, a fat lizard.

Up on the little hill, O-lo-a sat among her women and children, the centre of attention, smiling with pleasure as they groomed her long sleek black hair,

Potter. Arkham House, ISBN 0-87054-165-X, 515pp, hardcover, \$26.95. (Horror collection, first edition; containing 39 stories by a distinguished author of the macabre and weird, it's essentially an expansion of his previous British compendium *Dark Feasts* [Robinson, 1987]; we ought to sing the praises of Arkham House more often: they really are the most extraordinary small press in the world, whose unfailingly beautiful books have been appearing a couple of times a year for over 50 years now; founded by the late August Derleth, edited for the past 20-odd years by James Turner, Arkham is an American house but they've done a great deal for British writers.) 26th February 1993.

Engh, M.J. **Rainbow Man**. Tor, ISBN 0-312-85468-4, 253pp, hardcover, \$17.95. (sf novel, first edition; proof copy received; Mary Engh's first novel, Arslan [published in Britain as *A Wind from Bukhara*], was outstanding; her long-awaited second, *Wheel of the Winds*, was generally reckoned a disappointment; which way will her third one fall?; let's await the review.) May 1993.

Harbottle, Philip, and Stephen Holland. **Vultures of the Void: A History of British Science Fiction Publishing, 1946-1956**. "I.O. Evans Studies in the Philosophy and Criticism of Literature, Number 13." Borgo Press [PO Box 2845, San Bernardino, CA 92406, USA], ISBN 0-89370-415-6, 128pp, trade paperback, \$15. (Popular-fiction history, first edition; there is a simultaneous hardcover edition [not seen]; it's an account of the "unspeakable" years of English sf, with an emphasis on the many cheap paperback lines of the day; valuable as a record of an under-explored area, it's written by two well-known British pulp-fiction enthusiasts in a style commensurate with its subject matter; the series editor is the indefatigable "Robert Reginald" [Michael Burgess], and other titles already published [but not seen by us] include such items as *The Pulp Western: A Popular History of the Western Fiction Magazine in America* by John A. Dinan.) Late entry: December 1992 publication, received in January 1993.

Lafferty, R.A. **Argo: More Than Melchisedech**. Afterword by the author. Illustrated by R. Ward Shipman. U.M. Press [Box 390, Sta. A., Weston, Ont. M9N 3N1, Canada], ISBN 0-921322-34-8, pages unnumbered [circa 200pp], hardcover, \$19.95. (Sf/fantasy novel, first edition; there is a simultaneous signed limited edition [not seen]; this is described in the accompanying publicity letter as the "climax of Lafferty's Argo Mythos which also includes the Nebula nominated Devil is Dead and Archipelago.") Late entry: December 1992 publication, received in January 1993.

Lafferty, R.A. **Iron Tears**. Introduction by Michael Swanwick. Edgewood Press [PO Box 264, Cambridge, MA 02238, USA], ISBN 0-9629066-2-X, 219pp, trade paperback, \$10.00 [plus \$5 for overseas postage]. (Sf/fantasy collection, first edition; 15 stories, mainly first published in magazines and original anthologies during the 1970s and 80s; this solid new collection and the above novel prove that the Lafferty industry remains vigorous; it's heartening to see there are so many small presses eager to publish an author so resolutely "uncommercial.") Late entry: December 1992 [?] publication, received in January 1993.

Scott, Melissa. **Burning Bright**. Tor, ISBN 0-312-85502-8, 345pp, hardcover, \$21.95. (Sf novel, first edition; proof copy received.) May 1993.

Simak, Clifford D. **The Goblin Reservation**. "Masters of Science Fiction." Carroll & Graf, ISBN 0-88184-897-2, 192pp, paperback,

\$3.95. (Sf/fantasy novel, first published in 1968; not one of Simak's greatest, but an enjoyable romp.) 16th February 1993.

Vegetti, Ernesto, and Piergiorgio Nicolazzini, eds. **Fantascienza, Fantasy & Horror in Italia, 1990**. World SF/Italian Section [c/o Piergiorgio Nicolazzini, G.B. Moroni, 22, 20146 Milano, Italy], no ISBN shown, iv+137pp, paperback, £10 [US\$15] plus £1.50 [\$2] overseas postage. (Bibliography of sf and related genre works published in Italy, first edition; an accompanying letter describes it as "the first instalment of a projected series of annual compilations"; quite professionally produced, it's a worthy first stab at what librarians like to call "bibliographical control" of its subject, but it could have done with an overall author index so that one could look up short-story appearances by various writers in various anthologies.) No date shown: probably a 1992 publication, received in January 1993.

Wolfe, Gene. **Young Wolfe: A Collection of Early Stories**. Illustrated by R. Ward Shipman. U.M. Press [Box 390, Sta. A., Weston, Ont. M9N 3N1, Canada], ISBN 0-921322-32-1, 69pp, hardcover, \$15.95. (Sf/fantasy collection, first edition; there is a simultaneous signed limited edition priced at \$40 [not seen]; it contains nine stories, none of them previously collected [Wolfe's bottom drawer seems to be, er, bottomless]; two of them appeared in a student magazine as early as 1951; the others date from the 1960s and include his first fully professional sale, "The Dead Man" [Sir! magazine, October 1965], as well as two stories which were never published at all; this volume is obviously a must for Wolfe completists.) Late entry: December 1992 publication, received in January 1993.

Yarbro, Chelsea Quinn. **Darker Jewels**. Tor, ISBN 0-312-85196-7, 398pp, hardcover, \$19.95. (Horror/fantasy novel, first edition; proof copy received; it's yet another in the long-running "Count Saint-Germain" series of historical vampire tales; this time he's at the court of Ivan the Terrible.) April 1993.

Interaction Continued from page 5

Thanks for an entertaining sf magazine. I did buy *Fantasy & Science Fiction* for a couple of years, but it didn't have the edge that Interzone has. Here are my opinions on the best of the year, slightly short due to my starting at issue 57. The fiction is mostly good, with some total rubbish. The best of the year without doubt was "The Sculptor" by Garry Kilworth, the brightest star in my galaxy. Julian Flood's "The Jade Pool" was another brilliant effort, closely followed by "Mothmusic" by Sarah Ash – two newcomers with a streak of amazing talent in them. Honourable mentions to "Tom Joad" and "Cyril the Cyberpig." Although not a proper short story, Kim Stanley Robinson's "Red Mars" got my appetite going for more of him. I've since read *The Gold Coast* and *The Wild Shore*. I don't know why I missed out on him this long. A definite grand master of the future. – **Paul Hanson**, Scunthorpe.

A good year's subscription, with number 63 being something of an ideal issue. Generally speaking, the quality of the stories published has become superb. Even of the stories I've listed as dislikes I concede they mostly deserved to be seen. The only exception is the terrible Charles Sheffield story, a particular disappointment as I've enjoyed his early novels. Keep 'em coming. – **John Feetenby**, Aberdeen.

The standard of stories over the year has been in general as good as ever, and a couple of issues were really outstanding. However, the bad news is that issue 65 was a real turkey for fiction: I'm so sick of the USSA stories that I skipped straight over "Tom Joad" (Newman/Byrne); the nadir of the year, however, has to be "Horse Meat" (Aldiss). – **Andy Hogbin**, Camberley, Surrey.

There are two stories which stood out above the others: "Horse Meat" which was wonderfully bleak and disgusting (it is great that a writer of Brian Aldiss's experience can still shock and provoke thought) and Julian Flood's "The Jade Pool," which was, by a short head, my favourite of the year. – **Peter Allen**, Birmingham.

Not a vintage year, I thought, but plenty worthwhile in every issue. "Tom Joad" came top of my own list, a pleasing surprise as previously I was not much taken with "alternative history." With recession still pinching and pushing so many to the wall, I'm delighted that IZ continues to arrive regularly each month full of stimulating fiction, news and opinions. – **Lannah Battley**, Dyfed, Wales.

Editor's Notes

Nick Lowe (film reviews) is resting this month, but should be back next issue.

Meanwhile, Wendy Bradley will be taking a break from her TV reviews, and this month's column is her last for a while.

Next issue, we're hoping to run a surprise non-fiction feature by **J.G. Ballard**.